

# Great Hikes in Tennessee State Parks:

## Fall Creek Falls Cable Trail - The Shortest Hard Hike

By Fran Wallas

**T**he Cable Trail at Fall Creek Falls State Park near Pikeville is a wonderful summer hike.

Rhododendrons shade the whole way. There is no poison ivy, and at the end of your hike is the cool stream.

This trail also offers a chance to see if you are part mountain goat. Have you ever wondered if you would like rock climbing? Now is your chance to find out. At the beginning of the trail, you get the feeling of going over the edge as you hang on to the cable and begin lowering yourself from rock to rock. It is an adventure as you go from one side of the cable to the other carefully choosing your way down. The hike down and back is less than half a mile. Although this hike is short, you may want to allow several hours to fully enjoy it.

Once at the bottom, there are many places to explore. You may want to choose a rock nearby for that perfect picnic. Take off your shoes and cool your feet in the creek. For a special treat, bring a book, and read to the sound of the waterfall.

If you enjoy rock hopping, try winding your way down the side of the stream. Before you wander downstream, be sure to pile some rocks or leave a piece of clothing to help you find the trail when you return. In late

summer, you may see the trees on the bluff above just beginning to turn their fall colors.

The hike up is a totally different experience from the hike down. You will get to know the rocks really well as you look for footholds and knobs to grab onto. When you reach the top, you will want to take one more look back. Yes, you really did it.

**Right: The start of the Cable Trail at Fall Creek Falls State Park sends you over the edge into the rhododendron. Below: Hiking up the Cable Trail is a different experience than the hike down.**



**A look down to the end of the Cable Trail at Fall Creek Falls State Park.**



### Directions

From Nashville take I-40 to exit 288 and take Highway 111 South until you get to Spencer. Turn left on Highway 284 East and follow the signs to Fall Creek Falls State Park. From Knoxville, take I-40 to Crossville to exit 322 Peavine Road. Take a left off of the exit and turn right at the light on Highway 101. Take Highway 101 to Highway 30. Turn right on Highway 30. Drive until you get to the entrance to the park on the left. Once you have reached the park, follow the signs to the nature center and park in the picnic area. Trail maps are available at the nature center and at the inn.

You may want to start off your hike by walking towards the Nature Center, but taking the first walkway to the right. At the end of the walkway is a beautiful overlook. There is one, and if you are lucky, two waterfalls depending on flow. Way down at the bottom beside the creek, you will see your hike destination. To get to the trailhead, walk back to Highway 284 and turn left walking past the sign that says, "to 30. A short way up the road, you will see the Cable Trail on your left.

### Fall Creek Falls State Park



(Fran Wallas is an avid hiker. She works as an attorney for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation in Nashville.)